
The African Blood Brotherhood

by Cyril V. Briggs

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Attributed to magazine editor and ABB founder Cyril V. Briggs.

The African Blood Brotherhood is probably the first Negro *secret* organization to be effected in the Western world, having as its sole purpose the liberation of Africa and the redemption of the Negro race.

The organization now numbers over 1,000 men and women of African blood. It is confined to persons of African blood. Its organization has been carried out along lines similar to secret fraternal orders and societies. It has a ritual of its own, with degrees, passwords, signs, etc., and a formal initiation ceremony when a solemn oath is taken. Membership is at present by voluntary enlistment, subject to acceptance or rejection at the discretion of the body. Appropriate regalia and uniforms are under consideration. Post commands have been established in various cities of the United States, in the West Indies, Central and South America, and in West Africa.

The government of the African Blood Brotherhood is by a Supreme Council or War College of five, which controls the appointment and tenure of office of the commanders of the various posts and formulates the policies and directs the activities and movements of the organization. There are two sets of other officers — the secretaries, treasurers, chaplains, etc., of the various posts, and the international officers. These are all elected by the members, with all members participating in the election of the international officers. These officers are subject to the rulings and decrees of the Supreme Council or War Cwaollege.

Under the rules of the organization, the word of the council, when issued in the form of “instructions,” must be considered as law by the members of the brotherhood. When issued in the form of

“suggestions,” it is expected to command at least respectful and careful consideration.

There are at present no stipulated fees or membership dues. These are left to the patriotism and financial ability of each member. As not enough money could be realized for the work the brotherhood has in view by the medium of fees and dues, unless these were made so large as to be prohibitive to the great mass of the race, the expedient was adopted of allowing each member to fix his own dues, by pledging himself a monthly donation. The amount may be 25 cents a month, 50 cents, \$1, or whatever sum the individual can give under the patriotic rule of “Give till it hurts.”

Two-thirds of all donations are allocated to the war chest as a central fund for general operations of the organization. The other one-third is placed at the disposal of the post through which it was received, to be used, within the rulings of the War College, for the work of local training in the essential industries, in science, etc.

The following “suggestions” have been issued for the guidance of members and for the race in general:

- Affiliate yourself with the liberal, radical, and labor movements. Don't mind being called “Bolsheviki” by the same people who call you “nigger.” Such affiliation in itself won't solve our problems, but it will help immensely.

- Patronize race enterprises and study the cooperative spirit. But discriminate between good and bad, honest and dishonest enterprises.

- Encourage the Universal Negro Improvement Association movement as the biggest thing so far effected in surface movements.

- Reject all allegiance that carries no corresponding rights and privileges, and remember that such rights and privileges should always precede allegiance and patriotism.

- Make the cause of other oppressed peoples your cause, that they may respond in kind, and so make possible effective coordination in one big blow against tyranny.

- Find possibilities for the study of modern warfare, aeronautics and the artillery branch in particular.

- Learn a trade. Get into the essential industries where possible. Study modern agricultural methods, horticulture, medicine, chemistry, etc. Encourage those studying in any of these lines.

- Adopt the policy of race first, without, however, ignoring useful alliances with other groups.

- Help propagate the “race first idea” by first studying the subject and then using your knowledge to enlighten your fellows.
- Invest in race enterprises, but follow your money with your active, personal interest.
- Kill the caste idea. Stop dividing the race into light and dark. Stop harping about West Indians, Southerners, Northerners, and so forth. Let the line of cleavage fall between true Negroes and false Negroes.
- Help build up a strong public opinion against the serviles of the race, against ignorance, against immorality and race debasement.
- Wage war against the alien education that is being taught our children in the white man’s schools. Demand the true facts concerning the grand achievements of the Negro race.
- Inculcate race pride in the little ones by instructing them at home in the facts of Negro achievement.
- Organize literary clubs for discussion and study of Negro history and problems.
- Ask your ministers to teach race history from the pulpit, in the Sunday Schools and lyceums.
- Don’t leave everything to your officers and leaders. Get into the fight yourself. Do your bit financially, orally, and in every possible way.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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